

manipulated by the Communists"—especially among "peoples who have barely emerged from the emergency of total societies."

And the Communists are there—waiting or working.

Refugees Report on Russia -- 2

Army Rifts Seen Greater Than When Nazis Struck

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Edmund Stevens, who received the Pulitzer Prize in 1950 for his series "This Is Russia Uncensored," now tells the inside story of the Soviet Union today, based on reports from recent Soviet refugees. This is the second of ten articles to be published Tuesdays and Thursdays. The next article will deal with the prospects of a military coup.

By Edmund Stevens

Staff Correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor

Munich, Germany

Disaffection in the Soviet Army is more widespread today, according to recent Russian refugees, than it was in the early stages of the German invasion when whole Army corps surrendered to the enemy.

A former colonel of Army intelligence who up to the time of his defection was with the Soviet occupation forces in Germany, declares that in the winter of 1941-42 many of the generals were reluctant to continue fighting for the regime, and only a combination of fortuitous circumstances kept Prime Minister Joseph Stalin and his associates in power. A decisive factor was the blind and brutal policy of Hitler who, by his treatment of war prisoners and of civilians in the areas behind the German lines, convinced the Army and the people that Stalin was, after all, the lesser evil.

Acute Demoralizing Effect

After the war, thousands of Soviet troops remained abroad with the occupation forces, together with a large number of civilian personnel in various administrative and economic capacities. For the first time people of the Soviet generation came into contact with the outside world hitherto known to them only through the distorted lenses of Soviet propaganda.

Even in devastated Germany they saw living standards far superior to what they were accustomed to back home. Their reports filtered back despite stringent censorship. As early as December, 1946, the Military Council of the Soviet occupation troops in Germany stated in a resolution that the "Capitalist atmosphere" was having a demoralizing effect on the troops.

By 1948 the danger to morale was deemed so acute that the command ordered total isolation of occupation personnel from the German population. But such a regulation proved not easy to enforce even by Soviet police methods.

Disaffection among the Soviet professional military caste has been enhanced by failure of the government to make good its wartime promises of a better, freer future, plus the shabby treatment generally meted out to war veterans, including the thousands of maimed and crippled who beg for a living in the streets.

While the regime offers the Army man, especially the officer, certain favors and privileges

over the civilian in order to secure his loyalty, it subjects him to greater pressures and restrictions in other respects. The Soviet officer has even less opportunity for free speech and personal initiative than the ordinary Soviet civilian.

From six in the morning to eleven at night, the soldier's day is completely regulated. His political indoctrination starts right after reveille with an early morning lecture on the "News," when excerpts and articles from the Communist press are read to the soldiers by people billed as professional agitators. Throughout the day, these same agitators keep popping up during every "recreation" period. Finally, in the evening after the routine tasks and chores, two solid hours are devoted to "mass political work." This schedule leaves the soldier not a moment for leisure or private thoughts of his own. His role in Communist society is constantly dinned into him without a letup.

In Russia proper, the soldier seldom leaves the barracks save in marching order. But among the occupation troops, discipline is far more severe. In fact, the barracks routine differs little from prison regime. As part of the rule against fraternization, a hostile attitude toward the German population still is inculcated among the troops, although Stalin himself poses as "the best friend of the German people."

Constant Surveillance

Back in 1947, Soviet officers received substantial pay increases plus special allowances. Nevertheless their conditions remained inferior to those of western officers of equivalent rank. Moreover, all Soviet officers, including generals — the generals even more so perhaps — are subject to the constant surveillance by the party machinery and the secret informers of the internal security organs. Not only does this inject an element of tension and constant fear into their daily lives, it also undermines their prestige and authority in the eyes of their subordinates.

The underlying reason for all this is essentially the same motive which prompted Stalin to decimate his corps of professional Army officers back in the late 1930's, when three out of the five marshals of the Soviet Army and a commensurate portion of other ranks were executed.

A carefully checked list of Soviet marshals and general officers known to have been executed in that period includes 113 names but is still far from complete even for these top categories. Uncharted legions of other officers—

senior and junior—perished at the same time.

In the last five years, 35 top military figures either have passed on or simply disappeared, among them some of the headline heroes of World War II—many of them still in the prime of their lives.

Stalin, who trusts no one, obviously trusts the Army least of all. Like all dictators, what he fears most is a military coup to overthrow him, for the military is the one section of society which is armed. Moreover, most of the officers, especially those of proven ability, came from the people, not from the party, and their loyalties and antagonisms to a large degree reflect those of the unarmed civilian population.

In his search for protection from his people, Stalin has tried to develop a corps of Soviet janizaries by setting up the Suvorov military academies and Nakhimov naval academies. In the original conception, these institutes were to select promising boys—orphans preferred—of preschool age and train them throughout their entire formative period until they came out full-fledged officers thoroughly imbued with Stalinist communism, having heard and learned nothing else from the time they remember, completely cut off from all other influences and ideas including family ties.

Negative Reaction Noted

The first Suvorov academies were set up in 1943; the war provided the first convenient crop of orphans, but the scheme has not worked out as well as Stalin had hoped. On leaving the sheltered, incubator atmosphere of the academy, their carefully nurtured concepts are often rudely upset by the first clashes with Soviet reality. The result is sometimes a violent and negative reaction against everything pumped into them heretofore.

The only group with the Soviet Army whose loyalty to the regime is unshakable are the political officers and members of the military intelligence. These are the projection of the Soviet police into the Army, its spies and informers. Their personal awareness that in the event of a revolt they would be the first targets of popular vengeance renders them immune to argument.

But even now a vast mental gap and deep antagonism divides and isolates them from the other officers and soldiers. To a large extent they even think and speak in different terms. The bulk of the soldiers regard their lectures and propaganda sessions as so much rubbish which strict discipline compels them to endure.